

GANPAC BRIEF

FEBRUARY 1985

A monthly newsletter, written by Hans Schmidt

DRESDEN 1945

"In Memoriam"

Dear Members and
Supporters!

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Hundreds of thousands of visitors visited Dresden every year, to admire its fine architecture, to partake in its rich cultural life, and to appreciate the openhearted hospitality of its friendly citizens, the German Saxons.

Nobody could imagine that the day would come when this showpiece of Western civilization - and hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants - would be destroyed in a few hours by terror bombers that came from the land of the related Anglo-Saxons...



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On the next page you see the Altmarkt again. These two photos were taken a few days after the allied (British and American) air raid that destroyed undefended, refugee-laden Dresden on February 13th and 14th, 1945, killing 250,000 or more people (mostly women and children).

[The exact death toll at Dresden could never be established, and estimates vary widely. They range anywhere from 35,000 named on the post-war report by the "East" German (Communist) regime, to 400,000. I myself tend to accept the 250,000 figure mentioned in a WW2 German communique. I base my belief on a comparison of the 17,000 death toll at the small city of Pforzheim -and the area of total destruction- with the much greater inferno that occurred at Dresden. Both air raids were similar in nature, and both created the so-called firestorms. In addition, Dresden had been overcrowded with refugees fleeing the murdering, raping hordes of the Red Army.]

Allied "historians" who question the 250,000 figure because not all the bodies were found, seem to forget that since the end of WW2 numerous fire infernos have been registered where scores of people died but scores of others (particularly small children) were never accounted for since no bone fragments, or anything else was ever recovered.]

The destruction of Dresden was without doubt the greatest war crime during WW2. In comparison, all the others, including the execution by the Soviets of the Polish officers at Katyn; the unwarranted destruction of the abbey of Monte Cassino; the killings and maltreatment in the GULAG and German concentration camps, or the sinking of clearly marked Red Cross ships (and many others), become insignificant. [The expulsion of over 15 million Germans from their ancestral homes in the lands beyond the Oder-Neisse river, with the murder of nearly 3 million, is a chapter by itself, and occurred after the war, or -rather- after the end of hostilities].

On page 4 you will find reprints of some paragraphs from the article APOCALYPSE AT DRESDEN that appeared in the November 1963, issue of ESQUIRE magazine. To the best of my knowledge this was the first time since the end of WW2 that any major American publication had printed anything cohesive about the destruction, and this certainly doesn't say much for the so-called "free" American press. I must also note that the writer of the article is an Englishman, as is the writer of a book on the matter, David Irving. Whatever happened to the often stated inquisitiveness, the perspicacity, and the courage of American journalists?

And, will we ever see the day when the tragedy of Dresden will be the basis for an American television docu-drama of the type of "Roots", "Holocaust", "Winds of War" and "Shogun"? Perhaps it is just as well that hitherto no T.V. or movie director got the idea, one can imagine who would be shown having really suffered in this real holocaust!

Regrettably, I have yet to read an excuse or self-justification for the murderous machine-gun attacks on the helpless survivors by U.S. Air Force "Mustang" fighter planes. Perhaps some GANPAC BRIEF readers know ex-P51 (or P47) pilots, and can launch an inquiry. We will print any explanation.

The fact that the story of Dresden's destruction was effectively suppressed for nearly 20 years after the war had ended, indicates either a bad conscience on the part of the allies, or it was part of the still continuing attempt to retain -for the allies- the aura of the "good guys who could do no wrong" image.



Concentration Camp horrors? No, these are the bodies of German civilians killed in a terror-bombing directed at an "open" city: Dresden.



"For weeks the bodies of the air raid victims were put on makeshift funeral pyres, and cremated in the middle of the Old Market Place"(quoted from a book about the city's reconstruction).

"APOCALYPSE AT DRESDEN" The long suppressed story of the worst massacre in the history of the world. by R.H.S. Crossman [Excerpts from ESQUIRE, November 1963]

WERE all the crimes against humanity committed during World War II the work of Hitler's underlings? That was certainly the impression created by the fact that only Germans were brought to trial at Nuremberg. Alas! It is a false impression. We all now know that in the terrible struggle waged between the Red Army and the German Wehrmacht, the Russians displayed their fair share of insensate inhumanity. What is less widely recognized—because the truth, until only recently, has been deliberately suppressed—is that the Western democracies were responsible for the most senseless single act of mass murder committed in the whole course of World War II.

The devastation of Dresden in February, 1945, was one of those crimes against humanity whose authors would have been arraigned at Nuremberg if that Court had not been perverted into the instrument of Allied justice. Whether measured in terms of material destruction or by loss of human life, this "conventional" air raid was far more devastating than either of the two atomic raids against Japan that were to follow it a few months later. Out of 28,410 houses in the inner city of Dresden, 24,866 were destroyed; and the area of total destruction extended over eleven square miles.

As for the death roll, the population, as we shall see, had been well nigh doubled by a last-minute influx of refugees fleeing before the Red Army; and even the German authorities—usually so pedantic in their estimates—gave up trying to work out the precise total after some 35,000 bodies had been recognized, labeled and buried. We do know, however, that the 1,250,000 people in the city on the night of the raid had been reduced to 368,519 by the time it was over; and it seems certain that the death toll must have greatly exceeded the 11,879 at Hiroshima. Indeed, the German authorities were probably correct who, a few days after the attack, put the total somewhere between 120,000 and 150,000.

THE prelude to the bombing of Dresden was sounded by the Russian communiqué of January 12, 1945, which announced that the Red Army had resumed its offensive all along the front, and was advancing into Prussia and Silesia. This news could hardly have been more embarrassing, either to General Dwight D. Eisenhower whose armies were still recovering from the humiliating effects of General von Rundstedt's Christmas offensive in the Ardennes, or to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill who were now preparing for the Yalta Conference due to start on February 4. Since the postwar settlement was bound to be discussed with Josef Stalin in terms not of principle but of pure politics, Sir Winston felt that the impression created by the Red Army's occupation of Eastern Europe and advance deep into Germany must somehow be countered. But how? The obvious answer was by a demonstration right up against the Red Army of Western air power. What was required, he decided, was a thunderclap of Anglo-American aerial annihilation so frightful in the destruction it wreaked that even Stalin would be impressed.

January 25 was the day when the decision was taken that resulted in the blotting out of Dresden. Until then, the capital of Saxony had been considered so famous a cultural monument and so futile a military target that even the Commander in Chief of Bomber Command, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, had given it hardly a thought. All its flank batteries had been removed for use on the

This month it will be 40 years since Dresden was destroyed. For most of the people living now, the holocaust of the Saxon capital is just part of history, not unlike the destruction of Magdeburg in the Thirty Years war, if they are German, or the burning of Atlanta in the War between the States, if they are American.

Already it is doubtful that many American newspapers will take notice of this sad anniversary. Dead Germans (the distant cousins of most Americans!) didn't count much during the war, and they don't count much now. Besides, one doesn't want to destroy the illusion that WW2 was an absolute black/white conflict, with the good guys being the victors, naturally.

Besides, the editors of the major U.S. newspapers better get ready for another "Holocaust" (with a big "H") month in April, when all America is supposed to pay obeisance to the (allegedly) only real victims of that great war.

In this context we must pose the question whether the remembrance of the destruction of Dresden or, for that matter, of that other claimed holocaust, will really prevent similar occurrences in the future. (That is the reason given for indoctrinating our children with one-sided WW2 propaganda 40 years after the event). Well, I personally doubt it. There will always be people who like death and destruction (what makes them that way?) and it takes only a "legitimate" war to release their evil energies.

The only lesson I see in the crime of Dresden is that a great nation must be strong

Eastern front; and the Dresden authorities had taken none of the precautions, either in the strengthening of air-raid shelters, or in the provision of concrete bunkers that had so startlingly reduced casualties in other German cities subjected to Allied attack. Instead, they had encouraged rumors that it would be spared either because Churchill had a niece living there, or else because it was reserved by the Allies as their main occupation quarters. These rumors were strengthened by the knowledge that no less than some 25,000 Allied prisoners were quartered in and around the city, and that its population had doubled to well over a million in recent weeks by streams of refugees from the East.

We must now turn back and see what the airmen had been planning. Sir Arthur Harris was quick to seize the opportunity presented by the Prime Minister's insistence that Bomber Command must make its presence felt in Eastern Germany. Since 1941, by a slow process of trial and error which had cost him many thousands of air crews, he had perfected his new technique of "saturation precision bombardment." First, daylight operations over Germany had been discarded as too costly; then, with raiding confined to nighttime, target bombing, after a long period of quite imaginary successes, had been abandoned as too wildly inaccurate. The decision was taken to set each city center on fire and destroy the residential areas, sector by sector.

In this new kind of incendiary attack, highly trained special crews were sent ahead to delineate a clearly defined target area with marker flares, nicknamed by the Germans "Christmas trees." When this had been done, all that remained for the rest of the bomber forces was to lay its bomb carpet so thickly that the defense, the A.R.P., the police, and the fire services would all be overwhelmed.

This fire-raising technique was first used with complete success in the great raid on Hamburg. Thousands of individual fires conglomerated into a single blaze, creating the famous "fire-storm".

The Hamburg fire storm probably killed some 40,000 people; three-quarters by carbon-monoxide poisoning as a result of the oxygen being sucked out of the air; the rest by asphyxiation.

As soon as he heard that permission had been given to destroy Dresden, Air Marshal Harris decided to achieve this by a deliberately created fire storm, and to increase the effect he persuaded the Americans to split the available bombers into three groups. The task of the first wave was to create the fire storm. Three hours later, a second and much heavier night force of British bombers was timed to arrive when the German fighter and flak defenses would be off guard, and the rescue squads on their way. Its task was to spread the fire storm. Finally, the next morning, a daylight attack by the Eighth Air Force was to concentrate on the outlying areas, the new city.

Two-pronged attacks had been successfully carried out during 1944 against a number of German towns. The three-pronged attack employed at Dresden was unique and uniquely successful. The first wave, consisting of some two hundred fifty night bombers, arrived precisely on time and duly created a fire storm. The second force—more than twice as strong and carrying an enormous load of incendiaries—also reached the target punctually, and, undisturbed by flak or night fighters, spent thirty-four minutes carefully spreading the fires outside the first target area. Finally, to complete the devastation, some two hundred eleven Flying Fortresses began the third attack at 11:30 a.m. on the following morning. Without exaggeration, the commanders could claim that the Dresden raid had "gone according to plan." Everything which happened in the stricken city had been foreseen and planned with meticulous care.

enough to defeat a potential attacker, or to have the means to inflict nearly equal damage on the enemy's people and nation, and fight at least for a draw. The terror raid on Dresden would not have taken place (in the manner that it did) had the Germans had the ability and the will to create similar destruction in London, Edinburgh, or — New York.

The fact that Dresden was attacked and much of its population annihilated so shortly before the end of the war, when the Reich was already lying prostrate, says much for the hate and vengefulness of the victors. It had nothing to do with the chivalry and fairness that had regulated warfare between the white nations for several centuries. This may have been because a few of the policymakers of the allies were of originally Middle Eastern origin, like Henry Morgenthau, Harry D. White and some of Churchill's closest advisers, and for them the "eye for an eye" biblical admonition was still paramount. In fact, there are indications that one of the driving forces behind the terror bombings (including that of Dresden) had been Lord Cherwell, formerly Frederick Lindeman.

It is tragic that the majority of allied airmen who flew in the terror bombers were young men who could have been brothers and cousins of those, whose parents, wives, sisters or children they killed in the raids. At the time most of them felt they were just doing their duty for their nation, while at the same time preventing some extra-vicious form of barbarism taking over the world. Few realized that they were the real barbarians

Dresden is one of those German cities which normally devotes Shrove Tuesday to Carnival festivities. But on February 13, 1945, with the Red Army sixty miles away, the mood was somber. The refugees, who were crowded into every house, each had his horror story about Russian atrocities. In many parts of the city, and particularly around the railway station, thousands of latecomers who could find no corner in which to sleep were camping in the bitter cold of the open streets. The only signs of Carnival spirit, when the sirens sounded at 9:55 p.m., were the full house at the circus and a few gangs of little girls wandering about in fancy dress. Though no one took the danger of a raid very seriously, orders must be obeyed and the population just had time to get down to its shelters before the first bombs fell at nine minutes past the hour.

Twenty-four minutes later, the last British bomber was on its way back to England, and the inner city of Dresden was ablaze. Since there were no steel structures in any of its apartment houses, the floors quickly capsized, and half an hour after the raid was over the fire storm transformed thousands of individual blazes into a sea of flames, ripping off the roofs, tossing trees, cars and lorries into the air, and simultaneously sucking the oxygen out of the air-raid shelters.

Most of those who remained belowground were to die painlessly, their bodies first brilliantly tinted bright orange and blue, and then, as the heat grew intense, either totally incinerated or melted into a thick liquid sometimes three or four feet deep. But there were others who, when the bombing stopped, rushed upstairs. Some of them stopped to collect their belongings before escaping, and they were caught by the second raid. But some 10,000 fled to the great open space of the Grosse Garten, the magnificent royal park of Dresden, nearly one and a half square miles in all.

Here they were caught by the second raid, which started without an air-raid warning, at 1:22 a.m. Far heavier than the first—there were twice as many bombers with a far heavier load of incendiaries—its target markers had been deliberately placed in order to spread the fires into the black rectangle which was all the airmen could see of the Grosse Garten. Within minutes the fire storm was raging across the grass, ripping up some trees and littering the branches of others with clothes, bicycles and dismembered limbs that remained hanging for days afterward.

The most terrible scenes in the inner city took place in the magnificent old market square, the Altmarkt. Soon after the first raid finished, this great square was jam-packed with panting survivors. When the second raid struck, they could scarcely move until someone remembered the huge concrete emergency water tank that had been constructed to one side. This tank was a hundred by fifty yards by six feet deep. There was a sudden stampede to escape the heat of the fire storm by plunging into it. Those who did so forgot that its sloping sides were slippery, with no handholds. The nonswimmers sank to the bottom, dragging the swimmers with them. When the rescuers reached the Altmarkt five days later, they found the tank filled with bloated corpses, while the rest of the square was littered with recumbent or seated figures so shrunk by the incineration that thirty of them could be taken away in a single bathtub.

But perhaps the most memorable horror of this second raid occurred in the hospitals. In the last year of the war, Dresden had become a hospital city, with many of its schools converted into temporary wards. Of its nineteen hospitals, sixteen were badly damaged and three, including the main maternity clinic, totally destroyed. Thousands of crippled survivors were dragged by their nurses to the banks of the River Elbe, where they were laid in rows on the grass to wait for the daylight. But when it came, there was another horror. Punctually at 11:30 a.m., the third wave of bombers, the two hundred eleven American Flying Fortresses, began their attack. Once again, the area of destruction was extended

the very moment their bombs were dropped purposely on the centuries—old cities of the Reich, where no war industry was located.

No doubt, it took courage to crawl into the fuselage of a Lancaster, a B17, a Liberator or a Stirling bomber, and fly hundreds of miles into Germany, often haunted by FW's and Messerschmitt's and almost always under attack by the German flak. Tens of thousands of allied airmen died in these raids, and many more spent the rest of the war in German POW camps (where the treatment they received was better than that meted out to the German POWs in the allied cages after the capitulation). But I personally don't know how I would feel today, forty years later, and considering my love for the cultural creations of our Western peoples, if I had to walk around knowing that I had taken part in the destruction of Dresden, Cologne, Monte Cassino, Nuremberg or Luebeck. Certainly, the allied airmen who flew the planes were not war criminals, and few Germans regarded them as such (considering the damage wrought and the animosity created, it is amazing how few air crews were killed by the population when they parachuted on German soil from their disabled craft!).

In the United Kingdom the soldiers of the Royal Air Force were the special heroes during most of the war. Then came Dresden. Almost overnight adulation turned into revulsion, and after VE Day, when honors were bestowed, Churchill omitted any tribute to the men of Bomber Command. Air-Marshall Harris was castigated to the point that he soon left for self-imposed exile in South Africa.

across the city. But what the survivors all remember were the scores of Mustang fighters diving low over the bodies huddled on the banks of the Elbe, as well as on the larger lawns of the Grosse Garten, in order to shoot them up. Other Mustangs chose as their targets the serried crowds that blocked every road out of Dresden. No one knows how many women and children were actually killed by those dive bombing attacks. But in the legend of Dresden destruction, they have become the symbol of Yankee sadism and brutality, and the inquirer is never permitted to forget that many choirboys of one of Dresden's most famous churches were among the victims.

For five days and nights, the city burned and no attempt was made to enter it. Then at last the authorities began to grapple with the crisis and to estimate the damage. Of Dresden's five theatres, all had gone. Of her fifty-four churches, nine were totally destroyed and thirty-eight seriously damaged. Of her one hundred thirty-nine schools, sixty-nine ceased to exist and fifty were badly hit.

But some things had survived destruction. The few factories Dresden possessed were outside the city center, and soon were at work again. So too was the railway system. Within three days, indeed, military trains were running once again right through the city, and the marshaling yards—untouched by a bomb—were in full operation. It was as though an ironical fate had decided that the first fire storm deliberately created by mortal man should destroy everything worth preserving, and leave untouched anything of military value.

In their salvage work, the Nazis relied on some 25,000 Allied prisoners of war, concentrated in and around the city. Dresden, as was known very well in London and Washington, was not only a hospital city but a prisoner-of-war city—still another reason why the authorities assumed it would not be attacked. Faced with the appalling scenes of suffering, the prisoners seemed to have worked with a will, even after some of their fellow-prisoners had been shot under martial law for looting.

What Dresdeners chiefly remember, of these first days after the raid, is the disposal of the bodies. Throughout the war, German local authorities had been extremely careful to show great respect for death, enabling relatives wherever possible to identify and to bury their own dead. At first, this procedure was followed in Dresden. But weeks after the raid there were still thousands of unopened cellars under the smoldering ruins, and the air was thick with the fog and sweet stench of rotting flesh. An S.S. commander made the decision that the daily procession of horse-drawn biers from the city to the cemeteries outside must be stopped. If plague was to be prevented, the rest of the corpses must be disposed of more speedily. Hurriedly, a monstrous funeral pyre was constructed in the Altmarkt. Steel shutters from one of Dresden's biggest department stores were laid across broken slabs of ironstone. On this macabre gridiron, the bodies were piled with straw between each layer, soaked with gasoline and set ablaze. Nine thousand corpses were disposed of in this way, and eight cubic meters of ash were then loaded into gasoline containers and buried in a graveyard outside the city, twenty-five feet wide and fifteen feet deep.

It is unfortunate that the criminal acts against Dresden, Monte Cassino and elsewhere were also committed in the name of the American people. In later history books and on monuments it will therefore be stated that "the Americans" did this or that. No mention will be made that only very few Americans had prior knowledge of this travesty, and could not have prevented it even if they wanted to do so. It is for this reason that

The American airmen of the 8th AirForce were treated more fairly. This was made simpler due to the fact that the wanton bombing of city centers and residential areas had not been officially admitted, as Mr. Crossman stated in his article. But then the writer asked the question, what is more nauseating - British lying (that only "war" targets had been attacked), or American "self-deception" with the same claim.

Mr. Crossman continues (and I agree):

"What concerns me... is not the public image of Anglo-American idealism that was shattered by the Dresden raid, but the crime against humanity which was perpetrated!"

In 1985 we have an addenda to this:

American (?) bureaucrats and Justice Department lawyers are currently more busy than ever since the end of WW2 to accuse old men who fought on the losing side of the war as war criminals, and deport them from the United States (some to their certain death!); With the knowledge of the unspeakable and incomprehensible crime of the deliberate destruction of Dresden, and with the realization of other allied war crimes since the end of the hostilities (including the dismemberment and continued division of Germany and Europe), NOBODY IN THE ALLIED CAMP SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CASTIGATE AND PERSECUTE THOSE ON THE "WRONG" SIDE OF THE WAR UNTIL THE MANY (STILL LIVING) MAJOR ALLIED WAR CRIMINALS HAVE BEEN CALLED TO ACCOUNT.

historical revisionism and research is so important to future generations to delve into these matters, irrespective of what we may find, and try to discover the truth.

There is no such thing as "collective guilt", and it is ironic that the very people who are ostensibly (according to their own statements) and falsely carrying such a burden, tried their best to impose it on the Germans when WW2 ended. But there is collective responsibility, and nobody knows that better than -again- the Germans who forty years after that great war still live under occupation, and have to pay tribute to numerous former enemies.

For additional information regarding the attack on Dresden, and the events leading to it, we highly recommend the book "THE DESTRUCTION OF DRESDEN" by David Irving (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York).

The preface to the Ballantine Book edition of Mr. Irving's work contains the following interesting paragraph:

"For seven days and nights the city burned, and in the holocaust 135,000 died. It was the greatest single massacre in human history - and the most terrifying demonstration of air power in all of World War II."

Please note that the word "holocaust" was then (1964) used in the context of the destruction and burning of Dresden. Only much later was this word capitalized and appropriated by those who want the world to forget Dresden altogether. (Just watch your February 13th and 14th, 1985, newspapers for confirmation - - - will any major U.S. newspaper mention this tragic anniversary?) They demand instead that only their own real or imagined losses (particularly in the concentration camps), be mourned.

Proof for this contention can be found in the reliable NEW YORK TIMES INDEX: The first time that the word "holocaust" is mentioned there in conjunction with Jewish WW2 losses and sufferings was in 1978! Now, less than ten years later, the word "Holocaust" has become a household word (is there a day when we don't see it somewhere?), and our children are forced to quietly listen in school while docile teachers teach them vicious ADL designed or approved curricula, rehashing long-discredited WW2 propaganda.

February 14th, 1945
London EVENING STANDARD

FIRES SEEN BY KONIEV'S MEN

More than 1350 Liberators and Fortresses of the U.S. Eighth Air Force to-day attacked transportation and industrial targets in Dresden, Chemnitz, and Magdeburg, and a road bridge across the Rhine at Wesel.

The bombers were escorted by more than 900 Mustangs and Thunderbolts of the same Command.

BURNING DRESDEN, POUNDED LAST NIGHT BY 800 BOMBERS OF R.A.F. BOMBER COMMAND. WAS AGAIN HIT TO-DAY BY AIRCRAFT OF THE U.S. EIGHTH AIR FORCE.

The raids were in support of Marshal Koniev's troops who are less than 70 miles away. Russian troops may have seen the fires burning in the city last night after a double raid by our bombers. Crews of the bombers said that they could see the glow 200 miles away.

Two great blows were struck at Germany to-day. One 300-mile long stream of airplanes flew from the west, and other formations went from the south.

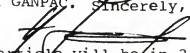
The Germans may be using Dresden—almost as large as Manchester—as their base against Koniev's left flank. Telephone services and other means of communication are almost as essential to the German Army as the railways and roads which meet in Dresden.

When we ask that you "remember Dresden", we don't do it for a "NEVER FORGIVE - NEVER FORGET" motive (I will never understand how American Christians can accept this alien battlecry without protest!). However, I do believe that we should reflect on the fact that otherwise sane and decent people are able to commit such an outrage.

The news item to the left shows how the attack on Dresden was presented to the British and American peoples in 1945. It reads so "normal" (for wartime), "reasonable" and innocuous, doesn't it?

We should not live under the illusion that the publication of the facts regarding the destruction of Dresden will prevent such man-made catastrophies in future conflicts.

To all of you our sincerest thanks for your sacrifices, your contributions and for your valuable suggestions. Without you there wouldn't be a GANPAC. Sincerely,


P.S.: China article will be in 3/85 issue!